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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 OUAGADOUGOU 000268

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AF/W FOR EPLUMB, JHUTCHISON

E.O. 12958: DECLASSIFY ON 04/09/2028
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [EAGR](#) [UV](#)
SUBJECT: Burkina Faso: French DCM on Compaore's
Health, Sexual Peccadilloes; Fired Ag Minister's
Arms Trafficking in Sudan

REF: (A) TD-314/015048-08; B) OUAGADOUGOU 237

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Classified by Amb. J Jackson for reason 1.4 (b)(d)

[1](#)1. (S) Key Points:

The French DCM told us April 8 that:

-- Burkina Faso President Compaore was recently
operated on for cataracts in Paris.

-- Compaore is probably in good health, but may
have contracted HIV/AIDS after years of sexual
promiscuity.

-- Compaore has better relations with Sudan
President Al-Bashir than with Chadian President Deby.

-- One reason Compaore recently fired his
long-time confidante Salif Diallo is because
of Diallo's arms trafficking to Sudan via an
aircraft whose markings linked it to Burkina Faso.

While the DCM's comments about Compaore and Diallo
are speculative, we report them because of the
importance of the subjects, and the Brun's excellent
position as a foreign observer of the Burkinabe
political scene.

Key Judgment:

-- While we find the assertions of Diallo's
arms trafficking credible (ref a), we doubt that
Compaore condoned Diallo's actions. On the
contrary, Diallo's trafficking, or at least the
fact that foreign governments learned of it, could
very well have been one of the last straws behind
Compaore's decision to remove Diallo, one of two
closest men in his inner circle.

[1](#)2. (C) Embassy recently reported on rumors
surrounding the health of President Blaise Compaore,
and the recent dismissal of his Agriculture Minister
Salif Diallo (ref b). DCM recently called on French
DCM Xavier Brun April 8 to discuss a variety of
issues, including Cote d'Ivoire, and April 8-9
general strikes in Burkina Faso over the rising
cost of living (septels).

[1](#)3. (S) Ref b reported that observers had noted that

Compaore had become much thinner over the last two years, and speculated that he had fallen ill, perhaps with prostate cancer. When DCM inquired about this and reports that Compaore had received medical treatment during two recent visits to Paris (one to meet with French President Sarkozy, and the second a few days later), Brun stated that Compaore visited the Val-de-Grace military hospital in Paris for consultations about cataracts during his first stay, and had a successful operation for their removal on the second visit. Brun added that he had no knowledge that Compaore had cancer or any other serious health problem.

14. (S) Brun passed on, however, speculation that both Compaore and Diallo were HIV positive, which Brun found believable because of their reputed sexual promiscuity, particularly of Compaore. (Note: Ref b also reported on Diallo's ill health, attributed to a heart attack. End note.) Brun added that, while Compaore and his wife Chantal had had two children early in their marriage, one of whom died, their marriage, had de facto ended years ago. Brun said that Compaore's wife had cheated on him, which enraged the President, who beat his wife so badly that she was hospitalized for 15 days. Since then, Brun said, Chantal has lived apart from her husband at a home next to the Prime Minister's residence in central Ouagadougou, and that Chantal and Compaore had maintained a "protocol marriage" for reasons of the President's image.

15. (S) Brun stated that Compaore had a reputation as a sexual "gourmand" whose appetite was so strong that he had previously had "Rasputin-like" escapades with the wife of at least one of his cabinet ministers.

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He said that Compaore's behavior was reflective of his "monarchical" attitude whereby a man in power believed that he could enjoy the "droit de cuissage" (right) to have sexual relations with any woman whom he chose (somewhat analogous to the right of some African chiefs to link up with any woman in the village that they desired).

16. (C) When DCM inquired about Brun's assessment of recent events in Chad, Brun stated that Compaore's relations with Chadian President Idris Deby were not warm and that (for reasons that Brun did not state), Compaore thought that Deby had been "ungrateful" toward Burkina Faso. Brun further asserted that Compaore had better relations with Sudan President Umar Hassan Al-Bashir, and cited Burkina Faso's votes in the UN to defend positions favorable to Sudan as evidence of positive Compaore-Bashir relations.

17. (S) In the context of discussing Chad, Brun stated that one reason Diallo had been fired from Compaore's government in part because Diallo's trafficking of arms to Sudan. Diallo had previously been active in arms trafficking in Liberia and Sierra Leone, he stated, and had been making money trafficking arms via what he described once as "Burkina Airlines" and the second time as "Faso Airlines." When DCM inquired whether Diallo had acted with or without Compaore's knowledge, Brun felt that there it would have been hard for Diallo to have engaged in arms trafficking deals without Compaore knowledge. (Comment: Brun provided no details about how the trafficking was carried out, or the origin of the arms. See ref B on a Burkina Faso registered aircraft marked "Faso Airways" involved in arms trafficking in Sudan.)

